



2004 Legislative Priorities

Cedar Fire Recovery and Funding
Lead Department: Office of Homeland Security
Financial Management
Governmental Relations

Background:

In the early evening of October 25, 2003 what has come to be known as the Cedar Fire began in the backcountry of San Diego County. Fueled by thick dry brush and powerful Santa Ana winds, the fire spread quickly in a southwesterly direction consuming lives, structures and open space at alarming rates. In addition to communities in the unincorporated portion of the county, the fire spread to communities within the City of San Diego continuing the destruction of property and structures. The loss of structures and open space within city limits occurred in Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta.

Because of the scope and destructive effects of the Cedar Fire, both President Bush and Governor Davis declared San Diego County in a State of Emergency. This formal designation is the first step in making federal and state emergency funding available to residents, businesses and governmental entities for qualified claims.

The City, through the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) and Financial Management (FM), is coordinating the compilation of department expenses incurred as a DIRECT result of the Cedar Fire. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to physical damage to City property, labor expenses, equipment expenses, contract expenses, etc.

Expenses incurred by the City will be submitted to the state Office of Emergency Services (OES) and passed through to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding consideration on December 8, 2003. Within approximately 90 days, the OES should provide some level of reimbursement funding directly to the City for those expenses deemed eligible.

Proposal

In addition to expenses incurred by the City as a DIRECT expense, funding needs exist for other actions taken by the City that may not be eligible for emergency funding from FEMA or OES. For example, on November 17, 2003 the City Council approved City Manager Report 03-231 that provided waiver of City Fees Associated with City of San Diego 2003 Firestorm Damage. Those fees may or may not be recovered through the state and federal emergency funding. If not recoverable, the City could seek a special appropriation from existing grants, the State Legislature or Congress.

In order to identify all the Cedar Fire related funding needs for activities or projects not eligible for funding under FEMA guidelines, the Governmental Relations Department proposes to coordinate efforts with OHS and FM. Upon final compilation of the funding needs, a report to the City Council Committee on Rules, Finance and Intergovernmental Relations will be presented for adoption.

Recommendation

Authorize the Governmental Relations Department to:

1. Coordinate efforts with OHS and FM to identify non-eligible City expenses incurred as a result of the Cedar Fire.
2. Present a Report of those needs to the Rules Committee for adoption in the City's 2004 Federal and State Appropriations Program.

Timelines

City Action	Entity	Date
State and Federal Disaster Funding Application	State OES	
	Federal Emergency Management Agency	12/8/2003
Develop City Appropriations Requests	Governmental Relations Financial Management Office of Homeland Security	12/31/2003
Adopt 2004 Appropriations Request Program	Committee on Rules, Finance and Intergovernmental Relations	01/2004
Receive State and Federal Disaster Funding	Financial Management	03/07/2004 (Approx.)